CHAPTER XI

SAN JACINTO

HOUSTON remained at Burnham's Crossing for two days, until all the fugitives and their families had been passed over, and then crossed to the east bank of the Colorado. He moved down to a place known as Beason's Crossing, where he remained until the 26th. The artillery which he expected did not arrive, and he complained that his orders for its transmission from the mouth of the Brazos had been countermanded by the government. The news of the fall of the Alamo and the retreat of Houston, combined with the withdrawal of the government to Harrisburg, created a thorough panic among the settlers. It was one of those alarms which are liable to seize any community on the receipt of sudden and terrifying news. The deserters from the army spread the panic from house to house with wild exaggerations as to the nearness and magnitude of the Mexican forces. Families packed their goods into wagons and started in frantic haste toward the eastern settlements, and men who should have joined the army took the backward instead of the forward trails. The flight and panic which spread through Texas were afterward known as "The Runaway Scrape." Nevertheless, the colo-

nists rallied to some extent to join Houston's army. He declared, subsequently, that at no time had he over 700 men; but well-informed authorities assert that before he fell back from the Colorado his forces numbered between 1200 and 1400. His dispatches to the government, while urgently calling upon the people to rally to his standard, indicated a purpose to fight on the line of the Colorado. He said, "Fifteen hundred men can defeat all the troops Santa Anna can send to the Colorado. Let all the men east of the Trinity rush to us. Let all the disposable forces of Texas fly to arms. Rouse the Redlanders to battle." He reported his men as in fine spirits, under good discipline, and eager to engage the enemy. On the 19th, Generals Sesma and Woll arrived with a Mexican force, estimated at between 500 and 600, and took a position on the west bank of the Colorado about two miles above Beason's Crossing, under orders from Santa Anna not to cross the river unless the enemy had retired. Houston sent up a small force to dispute Sesma's crossing, and some skirmishing took place, but the Mexicans made no attempt to cross. He sent out spies to ascertain the number of Sesma's forces, and, according to his dispatches, it was correctly reported to him. He could have fallen upon and destroyed Sesma's force, but he waited for his artillery and for news of the movements of the troops under Fannin.

On the 25th, a fugitive named Peter Kerr arrived in camp with the news of the capture of Fannin's

force. Houston, afraid of the effect of the news upon the spirits of his men, fell into one of his feigned rages, declared Kerr to be a traitor and a spy, and ordered him to be put under guard for execution the next morning. Of course he did not carry out his threat. He examined him privately at night, and was satisfied of the truth of the report. The destruction of Fannin's force left Urrea free either to form a junction with Sesma or to pass to Houston's rear. It is probable that Houston came to the conclusion, after the news of the defeat of Fannin, that an attack upon Sesma would lead to the concentration of the entire Mexican army upon the Colorado, which he would be unable to meet with a chance of success, while a defeat and the destruction of its only army would be fatal to the cause of Texas. It would be wiser to induce the enemy to divide their forces, and scatter through the country, so that they could be struck in detail. He made up his mind to fall back to the Brazos. He kept his own counsel, and took no one into his confidence except Colonel Hockley, his chief-of-staff. He began his retreat on the evening of the 26th, and fell back about five miles on his first march. The movement caused great dissatisfaction and some insubordination among the members of his little army. They wanted to fight, and, like all volunteers, could see nothing in a retreat but evidence of timidity on the part of the commander. It is the greatest test of the power and personal influence of a commander to keep a force of undisciplined

soldiery together and in heart on a retrograde movement. Furloughs were given to some to remove their families from the country between the Colorado and the Brazos, and others departed without leave, so that the force was reduced to 750 men. Fiery and insubordinate spirits advocated revolt, and even the deposition of the commander. But Houston was indefatigable, and never was his power over men more thoroughly demonstrated than in keeping the confidence and control of the lawless, passionate, and undisciplined elements that composed his retreating force. He was the first in the morning to rally the troops and start the wagons, and by jest and good humor, by objurgation and appeal, pushed the march over every obstacle, and kept the men in hearty spirits. He put his own shoulder to the bemired wheels, and his persuasive presence was everywhere up and down the line. It was a very trying time for Houston. He wrote to Rusk, the Secretary of War, after reaching the Brazos: "I hope I can keep them together. I have thus far succeeded beyond my hopes. I will do the best I can, but be assured the fame of Jackson could never compensate me for my anxiety and mental pain." The weather was very depressing. Continued storms and heavy rains beat down upon the unsheltered troops, and tried even their seasoned hardihood. The streams were swollen beyond their banks, and the prairie, which at that season of the year was usually an elastic carpet of green grass and blooming flowers, was a dismal and

miry morass in which the wagon wheels sank up to their hubs. But the line struggled on, sweeping up the families along its line of march, and sending out scouting parties to bring away the inhabitants of the outlying cabins. There were many painful scenes of distress and suffering. While the army was crossing the Colorado, two women were seen sitting on a log near the bank. The husband of one of them had been killed at the Alamo, and she was utterly abandoned and destitute. Houston gave her fifty dollars out of the two hundred which was all that he had for any purpose. It is an evidence of the vigorous character of the pioneer settlers, that she afterward wrote him that she had invested the money in cattle, and had made herself comfortable and independent. The army was increased during its march by three companies of 130 men, who had been brought from the mouth of the Brazos by Major John Forbes. It reached San Felipe, on the west bank of the Brazos, on the 28th.

From this point Houston determined to march up the river. It is difficult to understand why he took this course, unless, as he afterward said, he intended to fall on the enemy by surprise, when they arrived at San Felipe. The movement caused more insubordination in the ranks of the army. Captain Moreley Baker, with his company of 120 men, insisted on remaining to defend the crossing at San Felipe, and Captain Wylie Martin, with his, in going below to guard the ferry at Fort Bend. These withdrawals

left Houston with only 520 men. He marched up the river to Mill Creek, and then to Groce's Ferry, where he found the steamer Yellowstone, partially loaded with cotton. The steamer was seized by his order, and held to take the troops across the river if necessary. The army was encamped in the Brazos bottom. Heavy rains continued to fall, and the encampment was entirely surrounded by water. The valley of the Brazos became a running torrent, and any scheme to attack the Mexicans on their arrival at San Felipe was out of the question. The army remained at its camp, shelterless and with no food except the beeves they could kill, until April 12. In the mean time, President Burnett had issued a proclamation calling upon the people to rally to the army, and endeavored to allay the panic. But a universal alarm had seized upon the people. The fugitives from the region west of the Brazos, streaming across the country, spread the contagion of fear from settlement to settlement clear to the border of Louisiana. Samuel P. Carson, the Secretary of State, wrote from Liberty to President Burnett: "Never, until I reached the Trinity, have I desponded, I will not say despaired. If Houston has retreated or been whipped, nothing can save the people from themselves; their own conduct has brought this calamity upon them." On the 29th, Captain Baker burned the town of San Felipe on the mistaken supposition that the enemy were approaching, but it proved to be only a herd of cattle. On April 2,

Vice-President Zavala joined Houston, and a company of eighty men from Eastern Texas also arrived. On the 4th, Secretary of War Rusk came to give his counsel and assistance.

General Sesma, having been reinforced by the arrival of the troops under General Tolsa so that his force amounted to 1400 men, crossed the swollen Colorado with great difficulty on rafts. Santa Anna did what it was expected he would, and ordered a concentration of his columns. Generals Urrea and Gaona were ordered to move upon San Felipe to form a junction with Sesma. Santa Anna himself hastened forward to take command of Sesma's column. He arrived with escort at San Felipe April 7. Finding that Houston had vanished in the woods, he countermanded Urrea's advance, and directed him to proceed to Matagorda. In the mean time, General Gaona had lost his way in marching from Bastrop, and did not arrive at San Felipe until April 17. Santa Anna evidently believed that the Texan army had fallen back out of his path, and that all he need to do to finish the war was to push on and capture the members of the government at Harrisburg. He was probably also informed of the flight and panic of the people. Baker's small force remained to dispute the passage at San Felipe, and after some exchange of shots across the river, Santa Anna moved with a portion of his force down to Fort Bend. All the boats had been removed from the west bank of the river, but Colonel Almonte, hailing in English a

negro ferryman on the east bank, persuaded him to bring over his boat, which was seized. Captain Martin's force was kept occupied at the upper ferry by a demonstration while the main body of the Mexicans crossed at the lower. The crossing was effected on the 13th, and on the afternoon of the 14th, Santa Anna pushed on with a column of about 700 men and one cannon, with the hope of surprising Harrisburg. He left Sesma with the remainder of the troops and the baggage, and announced that he would be back in three days. He forced his troops through the heavy timber of the Brazos bottom and across the miry prairie with impatient energy, and arrived in the vicinity of Harrisburg at eleven o'clock on the night of the 15th. He entered the town on foot with sixteen men, and found it deserted by all except three printers in the "Telegraph" office. He made them prisoners, and learned that the members of the government had left that morning for Galveston Island. He halted until the afternoon of the next day for the stragglers to come in, and, having set fire to the buildings of Harrisburg, pushed on for New Washington on the border of the bay, where he hoped to catch the fugitive members of the government before they could make their escape to Galveston. An advance guard of cavalry under Colonel Almonte nearly captured President Burnett, who had delayed to remove his family from his residence in the neighborhood. He had just pushed off in a small sailing vessel as they arrived, and stood exposed to their fire

for some minutes, but fortunately escaped unharmed. Santa Anna arrived at New Washington on the 18th, and sent orders to General Cos, who was with Sesma's force, to join him by forced marches with 500 men. He intended to proceed to Anahuac, and from thence to Galveston.

The news that the Mexican advance had reached the Brazos was communicated to Houston by his scouts. On April 7, he issued an order to the army saying that "the moment we have waited for with anxiety and interest is fast approaching. The victims of the Alamo and the masses of those who were murdered at Goliad call for cool, deliberate vengeance. The army will be in condition for action at a moment's warning." On the 11th, two six-pounder guns, named "The Twin Sisters," which had been sent by the citizens of Cincinnati, arrived from Harrisburg. There was no ordnance with them, and horseshoes and old pieces of iron were cut up and tied in bags for canister. On the 12th, Houston became convinced that Santa Anna had crossed the Brazos, and determined to follow him. The army was taken over on the Yellowstone, and encamped at Groce's plantation, where it was joined by Baker's and Martin's companies. Baker and Martin were in a refractory temper. They asked if there was to be any fighting, and were informed by Houston that there would be. The companies at first refused to fall into line, and Martin was so insubordinate that he was sent to the Trinity to keep the Indians quiet,

if they should prove turbulent, and protect the families of the settlers. On the 14th, the army commenced its march to the south. The roads were in a terrible condition, the streams swollen and the prairies quagmired. Houston pulled off his coat, and put his shoulder to the wheels of the cannon. On the 18th, the army reached Buffalo Bayou, opposite the ruins of Harrisburg. Deaf Smith and Karnes, who had been sent out as spies, returned with a prisoner bearing a buckskin bag full of dispatches to Santa Anna from General Filisola and the City of Mexico. There was no longer any doubt that the Mexican commander-in-chief was with the force below them. Houston and Rusk had a brief conference. "We need not talk," said Houston. "You think we ought to fight, and I think so, too." Up to that time Houston had kept his own counsel, and a good many of the officers and men believed that they would take the Liberty road toward the Trinity. He then called them together and addressed them. His brief words were: "The army will cross, and we will meet the enemy. Some of us may be killed, and must be killed. But, soldiers, remember the Alamo, the Alamo, the Alamo!" Said Major Somerville, "After that speech there will be damned few prisoners taken, that I know." Colonel Rusk began an eloquent speech, but stopped in the middle of it, saying, "I have done," as if he realized that it was useless to inspire men for a battle which they were eagerly longing for. The dogged courage which had

held up the retreat now flamed into the fierce energy and lust for victory and vengeance. Buffalo Bayou is a narrow but deep stream, and was then running bank-full. Rafts were built of timber and rails, and were pulled across on a rope stretched from tree to tree, the horses swimming. Houston stood on the farther bank, and Rusk on the other, until the men were across. It was evening when the crossing was finished, but the troops pushed on, until they became so utterly exhausted that they were stumbling against each other in the ranks and falling down. They were given a rest for two hours, and again resumed their march, which they kept up until morning. At sunrise on the morning of the 20th they were halted. They had shot some wandering cattle, and were cooking their breakfast, when an alarm was given that the scouts had encountered the enemy. Leaving their half-cooked meat on the sticks, they hastened forward to Lynch's Ferry at the junction of Buffalo Bayou and the San Jacinto River, where it was expected that Santa Anna would cross on his way to Anahuac. No enemy was in sight, but they found a flat-boat loaded with provisions for Santa Anna's army, which they seized. They then fell back about half a mile to a grove on the banks of the bayou. The grove was of heavy live oaks, hung with the weeping Spanish moss, and free from underbrush. Before it was a stretch of gently rolling prairie, some two miles in extent. Upon the farther edge of the prairie were the marshes of the San Jacinto River, which swept

around it to the southward, and whose timber bounded the horizon. In front were two small islands, or "motts" of timber, a few hundred yards out on the prairie. In the rear were the turbid waters of the bayou, there broadened to a stream of considerable width. The two cannon were planted on the edge of the grove, and the men encamped within its shelter. The grass on the prairie had already grown up tall, and the vegetation was in the full leaf and luxuriance of the early Texas summer.

On the morning of the 20th, Santa Anna had burnt the warehouses of New Washington and a vessel lying at the wharf, and his troops were in line for the march to Lynch's Ferry, when Captain Barragan, who had been sent out on a scout the previous day, dashed up at full speed, and announced that Houston's army was close at hand, and had captured and dispatched some of the stragglers. At the entrance to New Washington there was a lane some half mile in length, which was filled with the baggage mules and the troops who had them in charge. When Santa Anna, who had not left the town, received the report of Captain Barragan, he dashed off at full speed through the lane, thrusting aside and knocking down the men and animals, and shouting at the top of his voice, "The enemy are coming! The enemy are coming!" This mad conduct excited and frightened the troops, and for some time there was an absolute confusion, the troops being on the verge of scattering in flight. Finally, they were formed in line on the

prairie beyond the lane, and a scouting party was sent out. No enemy was in sight, and the troops were formed into ranks and advanced. About two o'clock in the afternoon Houston's pickets were discovered on the edge of the grove, and Santa Anna again formed his troops in line of battle. He brought up his cannon, and fired a few shots, which did no execution, except in wounding Colonel J. C. Neill, in command of the Texan artillery. The Mexican skirmish line of infantry advanced, but was received with a fire which drove it back in haste amid the wild shouts of the Texans. After some harmless exchanges by the artillery, Santa Anna drew off, and established his camp with very poor judgment. Its front was open to the prairie without defense, and in its rear were the deep marshes of the San Jacinto River. In fact, Santa Anna appears to have lost control of his faculties since the surprise of the morning and the realization that he had cut himself off from the main body of his troops. His officers perceived and spoke of the weak situation of the camp, but no one dared to remonstrate with him in his half-frantic state of mind. Late in the afternoon a slight skirmish took place. Colonel Sherman obtained permission to take out the Texan cavalry to reconnoitre, and endeavored to bring on a general engagement. He encountered the Mexican cavalry, and some shots were exchanged by which two Texans were wounded, one of them mortally. Some infantry was sent to his assistance, but Houston refused to

advance for a battle, and the Texans retired. In this skirmish Mirabeau B. Lamar, afterward President of the Republic, distinguished himself. He had joined the army at Groce's, having walked nearly all the way from Velasco, and was serving as a private in the cavalry. During the skirmish a young man named Walter P. Lane was cut off and was in danger of being captured or killed. Lamar dashed forward, killed one Mexican, upset another, and disarmed a third, and brought Lane in safe. For this dashing feat he was given the command of the cavalry the next day. The Texans rested under double guard during the night, but there was nothing to break the silence except the voices of the night birds.

The morning sun of April 21 rose bright and cloudless. Santa Anna fortified his camp to a slight extent by piling up a barricade of boxes, baggage, and pack-saddles in front of his lines with an opening in the centre for his cannon. Boughs of trees were also cut and piled up as a sort of abatis. The Texans cooked their breakfast and waited for the orders of their commander. Houston was awake during the night, but slept for two hours in the morning with his head on a coil of rope used in dragging the cannon. At nine o'clock a body of Mexican troops were seen advancing over the prairie from the north. It was General Cos with a force of 500 men from Sesma's division. He had hastened by forced marches on the receipt of Santa Anna's orders to join him, and his men arrived so utterly exhausted that they

threw themselves down as soon as they had stacked arms. Houston said that they were not new men, but merely a body of the old ones, which had been marched around behind a rise in the prairie to give the impression of a reinforcement. But it is doubtful if his explanation deceived anybody, or if the Texans were at all discouraged by the addition to the enemy's forces. In the morning Houston had directed Major Forbes to provide a couple of axes, and summoned Deaf Smith. He ordered him to select a trustworthy companion, and hold himself in readiness for special service, and not to leave the camp. Smith selected Denmore Reeves, a fellow-scout, as his companion, and waited for his orders. Houston made no sign of opening the engagements, and the men became impatient. About noon some of the officers waited upon him, and asked for a council of war. Houston consented. The council consisted of Colonels Burleson and Sherman, Lieutenant-Colonels Millard and Bennett, Major Wells, Secretary Rusk, and the commander-in-chief. The question was put, "Shall we attack the enemy in his position, or await his attack in ours?" The two junior officers were in favor of attack. The four seniors and Secretary Rusk were in favor of awaiting the attack of the enemy. Rusk said that "to attack veteran troops with raw militia was a thing unheard of; to charge upon the enemy without bayonets in the open prairie had never been known; our position is strong; in it we can whip all Mexico." Houston

expressed no opinion, and dismissed the council. After the council had been dismissed Houston called Deaf Smith and his companion, and ordered them to take the axes and cut down Vince's bridge. The bridge was over Vince's Bayou, a stream running into Buffalo Bayou to the north about eight miles above the camp, and over which both armies had passed on their way into the *cul de sac*. Its destruction cut off the only means of retreat for either army, and made the coming battle a struggle for life or death. As Smith and his companion started with the axes over their saddle-bows, Houston told them that they must hurry if they would be back in time for what was about to take place. Smith smiled and said, "This looks a good deal like a fight, general."

At half past three o'clock Houston gave orders for the troops to be formed in line of battle. The only music which the Texan army had was a solitary drum and fife. As the troops were forming they struck up the air, "Will you come to the bower?" The lines were drawn up behind the mott of timber in front of the camp. Colonel Burleson occupied the centre with the first regiment. Colonel Sherman, with the second regiment, formed the left wing. The two pieces of artillery, under the command of Colonel Hockley, were stationed on the right of the first regiment, supported by four companies of infantry under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Millard. The squadron of cavalry, sixty-eight in number, under command of Colonel Lamar, completed the line on

the right. Houston was with the centre, Rusk with the left. At four o'clock the order of "Forward!" was given. The afternoon sun was shining full in their eyes, lighting up the strong, eager faces and the stained and ragged garments, as the line moved forward with trailed arms. As they approached the enemy's camp their pace was quickened to a run, Houston dashing up and down behind the lines, waving his old white hat, and shouting, "G—d d—n you, hold your fire!" When within about sixty yards of the barricade Deaf Smith dashed up on his horse, flecked with foam, and yelled, "You must fight for your lives! Vince's bridge has been cut down!" Where the guns were within point-blank distance they were wheeled and fired, smashing into the barricade. The Texans halted at close range, and delivered a volley, and then dashed forward with terrific yells, "Remember the Alamo! Remember La Bahia!" The Mexicans were taken entirly by surprise. Santa Anna had given up all idea of expecting a battle that day, and was enjoying his siesta in his tent. Many of the other officers and men were also stretched out in a doze. Some of the men were cooking, and others were in the woods cutting boughs for shelter. The lines were composed of musket stacks. The cavalrymen were riding bareback to and from water. When the Texan line was seen approaching there was the greatest alarm and confusion. General Castrillon shouted on one side, and Colonel Almonte was giving orders on the other.

Some of the officers cried out to the men to fire, and others to lie down and avoid the shots. Santa Anna ran out of his tent and yelled to the men to lie down. General Castrillon endeavored to rally some men to work the gun, but the cannoneer was shot down, and the men ran back, as they saw the charging line. General Castrillon himself soon fell dead, struck with a rifle ball. The Mexicans had barely time to seize their muskets, and give a scattering volley at the charging line, when it burst over the feeble barricade upon the frightened and disorganized crowd. The Texans clubbed their rifles or drew their bowie knives, and plunged into the mass. Some of the Mexicans tried to use their bayonets, but the brawny arms of the Texans struck them down, and, after a quarter of an hour of confused and desperate struggle, the Mexican army was in full flight over the prairie or running into the morass, pursued by the shouting and yelling Texans. Santa Anna, after running frantically about, wringing his hands, sprang upon a splendid black stallion furnished by one of his aids, and led the flight toward Vince's bridge. The Mexicans who fled into the morass were bogged in the quagmire, and shot down as they struggled. Some of them were intercepted by a deep and muddy bayou at the rear of the right of their camp, and were killed on its banks or shot as they endeavored to flounder across. Those who fled over the prairie were pursued by fleeter footsteps than their own, and struck down or shot. The cavalry pursued those who fled

on horseback toward Vince 's bridge. They found it destroyed, and only a few of them were able to cross the steep banks of the bayou. The Mexican sold. appalled by the fury of slaughter, threw up the hands and cried, "Me no Alamo! Me no Alamo! The Texans executed a full vengeance. Six hundr and thirty were killed and 208 wounded out of a to of between 1300 and 1400 Mexicans. Colonel A monte managed to rally 300 or 400 men beyond the camp, and make a formal surrender. The rest threw down their arms as they ran, and were herded in to the Texan camp after the slaughter. Houston received a ball in his ankle which shattered the bone, and his horse was shot in several places as he followed the charging line on the breastworks. He remained upon the field, however, until the Mexican army was in full flight. While riding over the prairie endeavoring to stop the slaughter, his horse sank under him, and he fell to the ground. He turned over the command to Colonel Rusk, and was taken back to the camp. Deaf Smith charged on horseback ahead of the infantry. When close to the breastwork his horse stumbled and threw him over his head. Smith lost his sword in his fall, and drew his pistol to kill a Mexican soldier who was advancing to stab him with his bayonet, but the cap snapped. He threw his pistol at the Mexican, and staggered him back. He then wrenched the soldier's musket from his hands and defended himself until the infantry came up.

When darkness fell the prisoners were put under

guard. Bright fires were lit, and the Texans gave themselves up to wild rejoicings. They yelled and pranced around the prisoners, shouting to every officer, "Santa Anna? Santa Anna?" until some of them pulled off their shoulder-straps to escape the annoyance. There was a grand illumination of candles, which the Texans had procured from the Mexican baggage, and carried about in their hands. The dark arches of the grove echoed with the wild tumult until nearly morning. The prisoners, however, were not maltreated, but only made subject to a fire of chaff in a language which they did not understand. It was merely the effervescence of vigorous animal spirits working off the intoxication of victory.

The number of Texans in the battle which achieved their independence was 743. Of these only six were killed in the engagement, and twenty-five were wounded, of whom two afterward died. The losses were almost all in the scattering volley fired against them before they crossed the breastwork. After that the Mexicans were helplessly slaughtered. The Mexican loss was 630 killed, 208 wounded, and 730 prisoners. As an illustration of the fury of the Texan blows, many skulls have been picked up on the battle-field which showed where they had been struck in the back with bowie knives and sprayed, as a pane of glass is sprayed by a blow. A large quantity of arms, baggage, and camp equipage fell into the hands of the victors, including 900 English muskets, 300 sabres, and 200 pistols. There were 300

mules and 100 horses, clothing, tents, and camp equipage. Among the spoils was the sum of $12,000 in silver. The soldiers voted that $2000 of this should be devoted to the support of the navy. The rest was distributed among them, making $7.50 each, which was all the money they received during the campaign.

The next day parties were sent out to bury the dead Mexican soldiers, in whose bodies decomposition set in so rapidly as to cause the more superstitious among the prisoners to attribute their disaster to a supernatural visitation. The plunder of the Mexican camp was brought in, and the Texans amused themselves by decorating the mules with officers' sashes and ribbons, and in all kinds of rude horse-play. In the mean time, parties were scouring the country in search of Santa Anna and other fugitives. Houston had prophesied that Santa Anna would be found making his retreat on all fours, and in the dress of a common soldier. About two o'clock a little man was brought in behind a soldier on horseback. His restless eyes and pallid countenance indicated that he was suffering from great fear. He was dressed in linen trousers, a blue cotton jacket, a cap, and red worsted slippers. The Mexican soldiers, on seeing him, exclaimed, "El Presidente! El General Santa Anna!"

When Santa Anna, in his flight from the battle-field, came to Vince's Bayou and found the bridge destroyed, he plunged in with his horse. The horse was

mired, and was unable to extricate himself. Santa Anna left him, swam across the stream, climbed the opposite bank, and continued his flight on foot. He found some old clothes in an abandoned house, and exchanged his gilded uniform for them. The next day he was discovered by James T. Sylvester and a party of four, who were scouting the country. He was standing on the edge of a ravine, and when he saw the party riding toward him he dropped on all fours in the grass, and was with difficulty compelled to rise. He claimed to be a private soldier, but his fine linen and jeweled studs betrayed him to be an officer. He then said that he was an aid-de-camp to Santa Anna. As the party started to return to camp he complained that his feet were so sore that he could not walk, and he was taken behind one of the men on horseback.

Santa Anna was brought into the presence of Houston, who was lying on his pallet in a doze, having been kept awake during the night from the pain of his wound. Houston was not much more distinguished in dress than his captive. His dandyism had given way to the exigencies of the campaign, and he wore an old black coat, a black velvet vest, a pair of snuff-colored pantaloons, and dilapidated boots. His only badge of authority during the campaign was a sword with a plated scabbard, which he tied to his belt with buckskin thongs. Santa Anna stepped forward, and said, with an impressive bow, "I am General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, Pres-

ident of the Mexican Republic, and I claim to be a prisoner of war at your disposal." Houston waved his hand for him to be seated on an ammunition box, and Colonel Almonte was sent for to act as interpreter. While waiting his arrival, Santa Anna pressed his hands to his sides as if in pain or fear, and his restless black eyes glanced around the camp. When Almonte came up Santa Anna complained of pain, and asked for a piece of opium. A piece of about five grains was given him, and he regained something of his composure. His first words were, "That man may consider himself born to no common destiny who has conquered the Napoleon of the West. It now remains for him to be generous to the vanquished." Houston replied, "You should have remembered that at the Alamo." Santa Anna endeavored to excuse himself for the slaughter of the garrison of the Alamo, on the ground that he was acting under the orders of the government of Mexico to treat all prisoners taken in arms as pirates, but was reminded that he was himself the government of Mexico. He declared that he was not aware that Fannin had surrendered under terms of capitulation, and threatened that he would have Urrea executed for deceiving him, if he ever regained power. Santa Anna desired to treat with Houston for terms of peace and his release, but Houston informed him that he had no authority, and that the matter must be referred to the government of Texas. Santa Anna then proposed an armistice, which was agreed to.

He wrote an order to General Filisola for him to retire to Bexar and to notify General Gaona to do the same. General Urrea was to be directed to retire to Guadalupe Victoria, and the prisoners at Goliad, captured at Copano, were to be released. As soon as the dispatches were written, they were sent off by Deaf Smith. Houston then sent for Santa Anna's tent, which he had erected near him, and delivered to him his private baggage untouched. There was considerable excitement among the Texan soldiers when it was known that Santa Anna was a prisoner. Some of the more violent wanted to kill him on the spot, and Houston ordered a guard around his tent for its protection.

The news of Santa Anna's defeat reached General Filisola on the afternoon of the 22d, from the mouth of an officer who had succeeded in crossing Vince's Bayou on horseback. It was at first disbelieved, but other fugitives came in and confirmed it. General Gaona had previously joined Filisola with his column, and a portion of his troops had crossed the Brazos on their way to Nacogdoches. They were recalled, and dispatches were sent to General Urrea at Matagorda, and to Colonel Salas at Columbia, to join Filisola as soon as possible. Filisola was informed that the victorious Texan army numbered 1200 or 1500 men, and decided to fall back to a more secure position. He retreated to a place on the road to Victoria, and on the 26th was joined by General Urrea. The commanders in consultation decided to

retire beyond the Colorado, and await instructions and reinforcements from the Mexican authorities. Their troops numbered about 2500 men, but they were worn out and discouraged, and destitute of supplies. On the 27th, Deaf Smith reached the Mexican army with Santa Anna's dispatches, and, although the retreat had already been decided upon, it was agreed to have it considered as under Santa Anna's orders. General Woll was sent to Houston's camp with stipulations on the part of Filisola that he should be allowed to supply himself with cattle for provisions on his retreat, and with secret instructions to inform himself of the condition and strength of the Texan force. Woll's latter purpose was suspected, and he was detained as a prisoner. General Cos had also been captured on the 24th, as he was endeavoring to make his way through the Brazos bottom. The Mexican troops continued their retreat with great difficulty, the roads being in a horrible condition, and the men and animals utterly worn out. They reached Victoria May 7, where they halted.

The news of the victory of San Jacinto did not reach the government on Galveston Island until April 27. It caused great rejoicing, and President Burnett and his Cabinet, who had been making preparations for a farther flight, if necessary, took passage for Houston's camp. There negotiations were opened with Santa Anna. He was ready to promise anything to secure his liberty. Houston addressed a note to Rusk suggesting the conditions of a treaty to

be made with him. They were the recognition of the independence of Texas by Mexico; the establishment of the Rio Grande as the boundary between the two countries; indemnity for all losses sustained by Texas during the war; Santa Anna and other officers to be retained as hostages until the ratification of the terms of the treaty by the Mexican government; release of the Texan prisoners and Mexican citizens favorable to the cause of Texas who had been arrested, and the restoration of their property; immediate withdrawal of the Mexican troops from the territory of Texas, and the cessation of hostilities by sea and land; a guarantee for the surrender of all Mexican prisoners as soon as the terms of the treaty were complied with. It was also suggested that agents be appointed to the United States to secure the mediation of that country between Texas and Mexico. A minority of the Cabinet, headed by Lamar, who had been appointed Secretary of War, in place of Rusk, who had been made a brigadier-general and given command of the army, opposed any negotiations with Santa Anna. They argued that as a prisoner no agreement that he might make would be binding upon the government of Mexico, and that as he had violated the laws of war of civilized nations by his cruelty, he should be brought to trial and punished with death.

Houston, being incapacitated by his wound from active service, addressed a farewell order to the army: —

HEADQUARTERS, SAN JACINTO, *May* 5, 1836.

COMRADES, — Circumstances connected with the battle of the 21st render our separation for the present unavoidable. I need not express to you the many painful sensations which that separation inflicts upon me. I am solaced, however, by the hope that we shall soon be reunited in the cause of liberty. Brigadier-General Rusk is appointed to command the army for the present. I confide in his valor, his patriotism, his wisdom. His conduct in the battle of San Jacinto was sufficient to secure your confidence and regard.

The enemy, although retreating, are still within the limits of Texas; their situation being known to you, you cannot be taken by surprise. Discipline and subordination will render you invincible. Your valor and heroism have proved you unrivaled. Let not contempt for the enemy throw you off your guard. Vigilance is the first duty of the soldier, and glory the proudest reward of his toils.

You have patiently endured privations, hardships, and difficulties unappalled; you have encountered two to one of the enemy against you, and borne yourselves in the onset and conflict of battle in a manner unknown in the annals of modern warfare. While an enemy to independence remains in Texas your work is incomplete; but when liberty is firmly established by your patience and your valor, it will be fame enough to say, "I was a member of the army of San Jacinto."

In taking leave of my brave comrades in arms, I cannot suppress the expression of that pride which I so justly feel in having had the honor to command them in person, nor will I withhold the tribute of my warmest admiration and gratitude for the promptness with which my orders were executed, and union maintained through the army. At parting my heart embraces you with gratitude and affection.

SAM HOUSTON, *Commander-in-Chief.*

He was taken on his cot on board the steamer Yellowstone May 7, and in company with President Burnett and the Cabinet, Santa Anna and his staff, and the rest of the prisoners, left for Galveston Island. Here Houston was transferred to the little schooner Flora, and sailed for New Orleans for medical treatment. The government and Santa Anna went to Velasco, leaving the Mexican soldiers herded in a camp on the island. At Velasco a treaty was signed, May 14, embodying the conditions suggested by Houston. The portion in relation to the cessation of hostilities, the surrender of prisoners, and the agreement for indemnities was public, but that in regard to the acknowledgment of the independence of Texas by Mexico was made a separate secret treaty, at the suggestion of Santa Anna, lest it should be repudiated by the Mexican government before he arrived home. It was agreed that he should be sent to Vera Cruz as soon as possible in order that he might fulfill the conditions of the treaty.

During the land campaign some operations had been performed by the Texan navy. Two small schooners, the Invincible and the Liberty, had been purchased and put in commission. Two others, the Independence and the Brutus, were afterward obtained. These vessels cruised off the coast for the purpose of interrupting the supplies of the Mexican troops by sea. Early in April the Invincible had an engagement for two hours with the Mexican vessel Montezuma off Brazos Santiago, and drove her ashore. The Invincible also captured the American brig Pocket, bound for Matamoras, with supplies for the Mexican troops. The Texan vessels were manned by volunteer crews, who were as ready to turn their hands to fighting by sea as by land. Some of the sailors had possibly seen service with Lafitte, and the commanders were as handy and brisk in fighting as in meeting the exigencies of navigation in times when the merchant service had all the attributes of adventure. "Mexican" Thompson was by no means the only daring and desperate adventurer upon the Gulf coast in those days, and there was no lack of men ready to take service on either side from sheer love of fighting or the hope of plunder. The American and English governments were obliged to keep cruisers in the Gulf for the protection of their merchant shipping, and on several occasions the belligerents were taken in hand and threatened with prosecution under the laws against piracy. The little Texan vessels inflicted a good deal of annoyance upon Mexi-

can commerce, and the Mexican government sent agents to Europe to endeavor to secure a more formidable fleet.

A great deal of local controversy has arisen over Houston's conduct of the San Jacinto campaign, and some very bitter criticisms have been made upon it. Some of the leading officers, who were afterward opposed to him politically, charged him with cowardice, and asserted that he was forced to fight by the demands of his men, and their threats to depose him if he did not. Houston's unsparing tongue and recriminating charges aggravated their violence, and the harshest personalities were exchanged. Houston defended himself at length in his last speech in the United States Senate, February 28, 1859. In it he gave a history of the campaign, and accused Colonel Sidney Sherman and other officers of cowardice and misconduct. Ex-President Anson Jones, in his volume "Memoranda and Official Correspondence relating to the History of Texas and its Annexation," published to exploit himself at the expense of Houston, declared that Houston's plan was not to fight at all, but to fall back behind the Neches, which at one time had been claimed by the United States as the boundary of its territory. It was expected that this would not be respected by Santa Anna, and that he would come into collision with the United States troops which had been advanced beyond the Sabine under General E. P. Gaines. This would give an excuse for active hostilities on the part of the United

States, and a war of conquest against Mexico, such as was afterward brought on by the movement of General Taylor's troops to the Rio Grande. Jones asserted that Houston had told him, while the army was encamped in the Brazos bottom, that he intended to retreat, and "win a bloodless victory." He believed that there was an understanding with President Jackson in accordance with this scheme. It is true that on the outbreak of hostilities between Texas and Mexico, General Gaines was ordered to advance to the frontier under instructions from the Secretary of War to prevent any attack by the Indian tribes against the people of either Texas or the United States. But he was ordered to observe a strict neutrality between the contending parties, and to permit neither one of them to cross the boundary in arms. Gaines concentrated several regiments at the Sabine, and applied for permission to cross the boundary in case the Mexicans threatened the frontier with a hostile force. It was given to him in his discretion, but he was advised not to advance beyond Nacogdoches. There is no doubt that President Jackson, like the majority of the people of the United States, earnestly sympathized with the Texan colonists in their struggle for independence. But there is nothing to indicate that it was not his purpose to observe a complete neutrality, and no evidence whatever to show that there was such an understanding between himself and Houston, as intimated by Jones. It was a proper measure of precaution to advance a force to the bor-

der to prevent the violation of United States territory by either party, and to prevent the possibility of any disturbance by the fickle and turbulent Indians. The presence of General Gaines's force, undoubtedly, had a quieting effect upon the latter, who might have been persuaded by the Mexican agents to take up arms against the colonists.

Houston's plan of campaign probably was to fall back until he was joined by a sufficient force to give battle to the Mexican army, if it remained concentrated, if he had to retreat beyond the Trinity or even to the Sabine. When the news reached him, at his camp on the Brazos, that Santa Anna had gone south with a small division he moved rapidly after him with the purpose of giving battle, and ending the war at a stroke. He might have attacked and overwhelmed Sesma on the Colorado, but it would only have resulted in a concentration of the Mexican columns under Santa Anna, and a further retreat or a battle at a disadvantage. By not attacking Sesma, the chance was that Santa Anna would scatter his forces to occupy the country, and in his impatience and self-confidence put himself into the power of the Texans. This, indeed, was what happened. There is no doubt that Houston followed Santa Anna for the purpose of giving battle, and with the assurance of victory. He addressed a note to Colonel Henry Raguet at Nacogdoches, just before crossing Buffalo Bayou to Harrisburg, in which he said: —

"This morning we are in preparation to meet

Santa Anna. It is the only chance of saving Texas. From time to time I have looked for reinforcements in vain. The Convention adjourning to Harrisburg struck panic throughout the country. Texas could have started at least 4000 men. We will only have about 700 to march with, beside the camp guard. We go to conquer. It is wisdom growing out of necessity to meet the enemy now. Every consideration enforces it. No previous occasion would justify it."

Houston might have attacked Santa Anna on the first day of their meeting, and before the latter was reinforced by General Cos. His reason, as given after the battle, was that he did not want "to make two bites of one cherry." What he did accomplish by waiting was to take the Mexican troops by surprise, although it was hardly to be counted on in the exercise of ordinary intelligence by Santa Anna. His destruction of Vince's bridge showed that he meant to make the battle a decisive one, and that he had the utmost confidence in a victory. There was no opportunity for the display of tactical skill in the battle, but his dash at the works showed the determination for a vigorous and deadly stroke, which was all that was necessary. Houston's plan of campaign was wise and prudent according to the ordinary rules of war. Perhaps he erred in not counting sufficiently on the fighting quality of the Texan as compared with the Mexican soldier, and might have defeated the entire Mexican army with as large odds against him as Taylor had at Buena Vista. But he

had no artillery, and his troops were raw and without discipline. It would have been a great risk, which he was not justified in taking, and the event was a vindication of his wisdom.